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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## COMPTROLLER MYCHAJLIW OPPOSES WASTING MONEY ON A NEW CONVENTION CENTER STUDY

*Legislature already rejected spending \$75,000 on a pointless study to ban plastic bags, and needs to commit funding to a new convention center before \$150,000 is wasted on yet another study*

(Buffalo, New York) – Erie County Comptroller Stefan I. Mychajliw is calling on the Erie County Legislature to reject yet another waste of taxpayer dollars on a proposed \$150,000 study to explore the feasibility of building a new or expanded convention center. Comptroller Mychajliw put his objections in writing to his colleagues in the Erie County Legislature expressing his opposition to a proposal to waste \$150,000 in taxpayer dollars. The proposed study focuses on the outdated and dilapidated convention center located on Franklin Street in downtown Buffalo, and whether or not a new one should be built.

“Taxpayers are sick and tired of politicians wasting their hard earned money on ridiculous studies. The Legislature rightfully blocked the administration’s previous plan to waste \$75,000 on a study to ban plastic bags in Erie County. It appears the county wants to double down on wasting money with another pointless study, this time on the convention center. If we had a dollar for every study politicians wasted money on in Erie County, we would probably have enough revenue to pay for a new convention center in cash,” said Erie County Comptroller Stefan I. Mychajliw.

“Give me \$1.50 and I’ll study it for you. Here you go: the convention center is old. It has to go. We could bring more conventions here with a new one. Stop studying it and talking about it until the county secures \$200 million to build new. There it is. I just saved Erie County \$149,998.50 and my study took ten seconds of rational thought. The reality of why the results of these studies never materialize hasn’t changed. There was never an appetite to spend the money in the first place, even when we had it,” added Comptroller Mychajliw.

The Erie County Comptroller was referring to multiple proposals of a new convention center over the last twenty years that have been considered by county leaders. He notes that taxpayers’ resources have been wasted studying potential new facilities at what is now Key Bank Arena, the Seneca Nation’s Downtown Casino, the Main Place Mall and what is now Big Ditch Brewing and Catholic Health’s headquarters. Nothing was ever built and the County Executive and Legislature never proposed funding before or after the study.

“We do not need a study at this stage in the game. Wasting taxpayer dollars on a useless study is a slap in the face to the hard working families we serve. We know the current convention center is obsolete. With all due respect, it’s a disgraceful dump. Our community is losing conventions and trade shows because of that. We need a real and firm decision and commitment to fund and build a new facility first and foremost. Without the financial commitment or funding to implement the study’s results, we are just wasting time and money – again,” continued Comptroller Mychajliw.

Comptroller Mychajliw clarified that he is not opposed to a new convention center, but rather to a costly and wasteful study absent a commitment of funds to actually move the project forward.

“The hotel occupancy tax revenue could be used to help fund a new facility, but that revenue has been raided by the politicians for years to pay general expenses of the county. The county is shortchanging tourism efforts to pay off its bloated spending problem,” said Mychajliw.

If the County Executive and Legislature designate a funding source and budget for a new facility, the Comptroller is not opposed to spending money on a plan to make sure it is the best facility possible.

“Before we agree to pay to study something that yields us an unaffordable \$200 million bill for a new facility, we should at least be upfront about what our budget will be and how as a community we intend to pay for it. That’s all,” concluded Comptroller Mychajliw.

Absent a plan to actually build a new facility, the Comptroller recommends using the appropriated \$150,000 to pay down current county debt obligations.